

People and the PURSUIT of Truth

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"WE THE UNDERSIGNED SEND THIS LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES"

*Norman Mailer, and 28 more authors;
March 24, 1977*

One is tempted to speculate on the recent troubles of the *House Select Committee on Assassinations*.

Would it be, one can wonder, in the interests of high officials in the CIA and the FBI to cooperate with such a committee when such questions as Oswald's links to the CIA or the FBI's alleged malfeasance in the investigation of the slaying of Martin Luther King could be patiently, even authoritatively explored while new evidence further damning the FBI and CIA could also be discovered? (Indeed, who in these organizations would be certain there was no such damning evidence?) Under these circumstances, how could the CIA and the FBI live with the *Select Committee on Assassinations*? How could they not be ready to apply pressure and sabotage against its workings?

It is, however, in the interest of the American public to have the Committee in existence. The *Select Committee on Assassinations* may be imperfect, impractical, and a demon for poor publicity. For all we know, it

may be riddled with undercover men. But it is the only investigating body we have in the House of Representatives with the obligation to subpoena recalcitrant witnesses on these matters and the duty to listen to witnesses who have studied the flaws in the Warren Commission report for years. By its existence, therefore, the Committee represents a threat to anybody who would hope to maintain public apathy about the assassinations.

Such public apathy exists for good reason. So long as we believe that it is impossible to learn the truths of Dallas or the truths of the murders of Martin Luther King and of Bobby Kennedy, then such deaths are too depressing to contemplate.

Yet we pay an incalculable price for living with these unsolved crimes. A clear idea of the character of the events of the recent past is essential to a democracy: without knowledge of what actually happened in an event, how can one debate its meaning? If we do not know whether Jack Kennedy was killed by the demented act of an isolated man, or whether by the concerted acts of a group of conspirators who employed Oswald as the set-up; if we do not know whether the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby was an attempt to spare the First Lady all the discomfort of appearing at a trial, or
(please turn to page 8)

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- solutions to great problems that are functioning well in some countries or places, yet are almost never talked about in the usual American press.

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may affect the assassination inquiry. One view is that the CIA, which is after all an invention of the Eastern Establishment, will want to protect what is left of its integrity and will continue to blockade the investigation. The news media, controlled by the Yankees, is already publishing negative stories about the House Committee and its chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague — the process used to discredit the investigator looks similar to the fate of Jim Garrison.

Another view is that the Yankees, with the help of the Trilateralites, will continue to restructure the CIA and to present the image of open government; part of this process may be to actually reveal part of the truth about the assassinations in such a way that Johnson and Nixon take most of the blame — in short, the Cowboys, or rather, a "splinter element" of that group is shown to be responsible for the political murders. In this way the invisible government as a whole stays relatively intact.

Carter's Role

It is difficult to say how knowledgeable President Carter is of the various cover-ups and the original assassination conspiracies. It is a safe assumption, however, that he will not have an easy time if he openly supports investigations — unless the strategy of the power structure has indeed changed radically. According to one source, Carter does not support an all-out inquiry./11/ The situation with the Carter Administration thus far seems very much like the Kennedy period, with Carter having conflict with the government on some key issues, such as defense spending. It may be that Carter is essentially naive to the workings of the power-control group and of his backer, the Trilateral Commission — if so he will need to learn very fast if he is to survive. In any case, Americans should realize that the problems of this nation have not gone away with Carter's pledge of openness, and that the age of inquiry begun with Watergate is only just starting to reveal the nature of governmental deceit.

Notes

1. Carl Oglesby, "The Yankee and Cowboy War," (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews and McMeel, 1976).
22. Carroll Quigley, "Tragedy and Hope," (Macmillan, 1966).
3. Quigley, pp. 929 - 956.
4. Christopher B. Sharrett, "The 1976 Presidential Elections: Aftermath," "People in the PURSUIT of Truth," Dec. 1976.
5. Oglesby, p. 161.
6. L. Fletcher Prouty, "The Secret Team: The CIA and its Allies in Control of the United States and the World," (Prentice Hall, 1973).
7. "Carter's Brain Trusts," "Time," Dec. 20, 1976, p. 19.
8. William Greider, "Trilateralists to Abound in Carter's White House," "The Washington Post," Jan. 16, 1977.
9. "Ibid."
10. "Ibid."
11. Penn Jones, "News Briefs," "The Continuing Inquiry," Nov. 22, 1976, p. 16. □

Mailer — Continued from page 1

an order that came to Jack Ruby out of the chain of communication that ran between the CIA and the Mafia, then we do not know which history we can act upon.

Now we have a new administration seeking to take America out of the historical despondency of the last

Salandria — Continued from page 6

seem to value freedom. But some of us still believe that without freedom, human beings cannot become fully human and that freedom is therefore supremely valuable. Perhaps the forces that now menace freedom are too strong to be resisted for very long. It is still our duty to do whatever we can to resist them."

24. What Are We to Do?

In accord with Huxley's sense of duty, what can we do? We can look at humanity as a species with a proud past, a difficult present and a troubled but still-hopeful future. Each of us can draw strength from the past. From the past we must draw upon those traditions which offer to mankind purpose, identity and love of his fellow man.

Each of us must draw strength from the present. From the present we must seek to understand power and the tools of mind control. We must presently accept that tyranny has gained new and effective technology in its age-old war against man's liberty. In studying the present we must raise our threshold of fear so that we can face hard truth. Hard truth will tell us that everywhere power seeks to defeat man's individuality, to program man to be alienated from all other men; to manipulate man to seek pleasure and not responsibility. The present task of those who love humanity is to get men and women to move, work, and join together in common love of human freedom, knowledge and justice.

For the future, what are we to do? We must unite in the task of freeing humanity from a drugged and pleasure-driven servitude. Should we be successful in joining people together, this work will transform our future world by defeating the somatized slavery of a Brave New World. Then we can remake our world into one which is marked by social justice, human freedom and a more equitable distribution of wealth.

As a first small effort towards these ends, let us engage now in a discussion wherein we will use the Kennedy assassination not as a mechanism for practicing a debilitating exercise in double-think, but rather let us use the assassination as a means of expanding our understanding of our times. □

decade. How promising if this new administration and Congress will recognize that the assassinations of the sixties are not old scars to be covered, but unseen bruises that still deaden the confidence of America!

For the shadow of the assassinations keeps us thinking we do not have a history that can bear exposure. That is a deadening suspicion. Basic to good feeling about our country is our ability to believe that our representatives are brave enough to undertake thoroughgoing investigations of the role of government itself, no matter where that may lead! Such a need will obviously not be satisfied by stopping the work of the "House Select Committee on Assassinations".

We, the undersigned, send this letter to President Carter and to the House of Representatives in the hope it will serve the idea that the continuing life of the "Select Committee" and the voting of an appropriation adequate to its needs are matters of significance to the psychic well-being of this Republic.

Respectfully signed,

Norman Mailer, E.L. Doctorow, Allen Ginsburg, Joseph Heller, Joyce Carol Oates, James Purdy, Mark Schorer, Wilfred Sheed, William Styron, Hunter Thompson, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., [17 other authors' signatures]. □